

Message Text

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41

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 AEC-05

AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FEAE-00

FPC-01 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01

PM-03 RSC-01 SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-01 TRSE-00

FRB-01 EUR-12 /098 W

----- 050768

R 160923Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2348

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BEIRUT 0639

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENR, ELTN, JO, LE, SA, SY

SUBJECT: TAPLINE OPERATING AT MINIMUM IN JANUARY

REF: BEIRUT 155, AMMAN 140

SUMMARY: JANUARY 1 PRICE DECREASES FOR ALL MEDITERRANEAN
CRUDES EXCEPT TAPLINE'S APPEAR TO HAVE CAUSED TAPLINE
THROUGHPUT TO DROP TO LESS THAN 10 PER CENT CAPACITY.
ONLY ONE SMALL TANKER NOMINATED THIS MONTH. END SUMMARY.

1. OUR 155 REPORTED THAT, WITH REPORTED LOWERING OF
ALL MEDITERRANEAN CRUDE PRICES JANUARY 1 EXCEPT THOSE
OF TAPLINE, LATTER APPEARS PRICED OUT OF MARKET.

2. TAPLINE REPORTS THAT JANUARY THROUGHPUT IS AT
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MINIMUM OPERATING LEVEL OF ABOUT 55,000 BARRELS PER
DAY (BPD) AT SOURCE, REPRESENTING THROUGHPUT TO SIDON

OF ABOUT 38,000 BPD AFTER DELIVERY ABOUT 17,000 BPD TO ZERKA, JORDAN, REFINERY. THROUGHPUT AMOUNTS TO EIGHT PER CENT 485,000 BPD CAPACITY. (DECEMBER THROUGHPUT AVERAGED 65,000 BPD.) TAPLINE HAS ALREADY LOADED LONE TANKER NOMINATED FOR JANUARY, A 10,000-TONNER (70,000 BBL).

3. TAPLINE OFFICIAL CONFIRMS LOW PRESSURE RESPONSIBLE FOR 5,000 BPD SHORTFALL ZERKA DELIVERIES, WHICH HE ESTIMATED WOULD CAUSE EXHAUSTION ZERKA STOCKS EARLY FEBRUARY UNLESS TAPLINE AND GOJ RESOLVE DIFFERENCES (BELIEVE 2,300 TO 3,000 BPD PARA 3 AMMAN 140 SHOULD BE TONS). SIMILAR DIFFERENCES EXIST LEBANON (PAGE 3, BEIRUT A-253) BUT NO RPT NO CRUDE SUPPLY PROBLEML LIKELY UNLESS TAPLINE SHUTS DOWN INDEFINITELY, WHICH UNLIKELY. COMMENT: TAPLINE BEIRUT SELDON CERTAIN OF CAUSES PIPELINE VOLUME FLUCTUATIONS BUT ASSUMES CAUSE THIS TIME IS OVER-PRICING SAUDI CRUDE VIA TAPLINE AFTER PRICE REDUCTIONS ELSEWHERE. TAX-PAID COST SIDON ESTIMATED AT NO RPT NO LESS THAN \$11,50/BBL. SOURCE SAYS SAUDI OIL OFFICIALS VAGUELY AWARE MANY TAPLINE PROBLEMS BUT TOO BUSY TO DATE TO FOCUS ON THEM. CONTINUATION CURRENT SITUATION MAY EVENTUALLY GENERATE PRESSURE FOR SAUDIS CONSIDER PROBLEMS, PROBABLY CAUSING GOJ AND GOL RENEW APPEALS FOR DISCOUNT OIL PRICES.
GODLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PETROLEUM PRODUCTION, PETROLEUM PIPELINES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BEIRUT00639
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750017-0213
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750148/aaaabpse.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BEIRUT 155, 75 AMMAN 140
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 AUG 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <26 NOV 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TAPLINE OPERATING AT MINIMUM IN JANUARY
TAGS: ENRG, LE, SA, SY
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006